

# Kids and Colds

Two kinds of germs cause infections: viruses and bacteria. Viruses cause the common cold. Antibiotics do **not** cure a virus nor make cold symptoms better. The good news is that colds go away on their own.

On average, children can catch between 6 and 9 colds a year! And, the typical cold lasts 7–10 days.

## An ounce of prevention. . .

You can help reduce the number of colds your child gets, even though you cannot eliminate colds completely. One of the best ways to keep cold germs from spreading is **frequent handwashing**. You and your family should wash your hands with soap and warm, running water, rubbing your hands together for long enough to say the ABC's. Dry your hands on a clean cloth or paper towel.

## Signs of the common cold:

- stuffy, runny nose
- sore throat that usually goes away with start of runny nose
- fever
- cough
- watery eyes
- feeling tired



It is normal for the mucus to get thick and change color during a cold. If mucus from the nose changes colors from clear to yellow or green, it does **not** mean your child needs antibiotics.

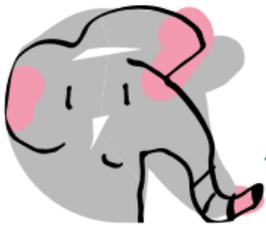
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## What you can do to help your child feel better:

- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and fluids to drink.
- Have your child breathe steam from a bathroom shower, or cool-mist vaporizer, or take salt-water nose drops.
- Give acetaminophen (like Tylenol) or ibuprofen (like Advil or Motrin) for fever and aches as directed by your doctor or nurse.
- Use cold or cough medicine only as directed by your doctor or nurse.
- Keep your child away from cigarette smoke.

## Call the doctor right away if your child has a cold, cough or runny nose and develops any of these signs:

- trouble breathing
- any fever over 100.4 degrees in a baby less than three months old
- a high or prolonged fever in a child of any age
- severe headache, neck pain, or stiffness
- earache or irritability
- eye redness or swollen eyes
- rash
- cannot or will not drink fluids
- sinus pain, pressure or tenderness
- cough or runny nose that does not improve after 10 days



**Remember!**  
Always use  
antibiotics wisely.

For more information about the REACH Mass Project, call toll-free 1-866-281-8906. Or, visit the Web site at [www.reachmass.org](http://www.reachmass.org).

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